

SMALL FARM *digest*

VOLUME 1, NO. 1 – FALL 1997

CSREES Small Farm Programs Merge

The former Office for Small-Scale Agriculture of USDA's Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES) has merged with the agency's Small Farm Program, according to a recent announcement by Edward Wilson, Deputy Administrator of the CSREES Plant and Animal Systems unit.

"All services that were provided by the Office for Small-Scale Agriculture will continue to be delivered by CSREES' Small Farm Program without interruption," Wilson stated. "By combining the two initiatives, we hope to enhance our working relationships with the small farm community and to strengthen our capacity to address the needs of small farmers in a timely manner."

In addition, Wilson recognized Bud Kerr, former Director of the Office for Small-Scale Agriculture, who has retired. "We hope to continue the exemplary service to farmers provided by Bud Kerr during his nearly 40 years of dedicated service to USDA," Wilson stated.

SMALL FARM DIGEST

Also underway is a merger of the newsletters formerly published by the two initiatives. The former *Small-Scale Agriculture Today* newsletter, edited by Bud Kerr, and the *Small and Part-Time Farms* newsletter, edited by Denis Ebodaghe, have been combined to create *Small Farm*

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USDA General Counsel James Gilliland (since retired), USDA Deputy Secretary Richard Rominger, USDA Secretary Dan Glickman, and Commission Chair Harold Volkmer at Commission's public hearing in Memphis. —USDA PHOTOGRAPH/ANSON EAGLIN/97CN02-16

USDA Commission Conducts Hearings on Small Farms

The USDA National Commission on Small Farms, appointed in July by USDA Secretary Dan Glickman, has conducted seven hearings across the United States to gather information on the problems of small and limited-resource farmers and to recommend ways to help. The Commission is charged with developing a national strategy to ensure small farms' continued viability, including specific measures the public, nonprofit, and private sectors can take to enhance the economic livelihood of small farmers. "We cannot let America's small farm heritage, the foundation of our rural communities, just slip through our fingers," Glickman said.

"We must carefully look at the barriers facing small farms and seek solutions to these problems."

The Commission, chaired by attorney and former Congressman Harold L. Volkmer, conducted its first hearing July 28 in Memphis, TN, and has conducted similar hearings in Sioux Falls, SD; Albany, NY; Albuquerque, NM; Portland, OR; Washington, DC; and Sacramento, CA. More than 200 witnesses have provided testimony in hearings that have been attended by more than 800 people.

Concerns frequently expressed to the Commission include credit availability; the need for more farmer-owned cooperatives; low milk prices; problems with loan applications; and access to conservation programs for smaller farms. Some individuals also have expressed concern about tax-related issues impacting farms and

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Small Farm Program Info on the Web

CSREES' Small Farm Program facilitates information dissemination and exchange on topics of interest to small farmers via a list server for special Small Farm Program mailings and an electronic mail discussion group.

LIST SERVER

CSREES' Small Farm Program list server is used to provide subscribers with special mailings on topics of interest to small farmers and their

USDA Meetings Focus on Small Farms

Several USDA-sponsored meetings have focused on small farmers and their communities this year. Cooperation and collaboration were highlighted at a meeting of 22 representatives of USDA agencies in Washington, DC, on March 13. Participants representing agencies with small farm programs or with information beneficial to small farmers met to discuss ways to enhance implementation of small farm programs and delivery of

PROCEEDINGS AVAILABLE

The *Proceedings* of the National Small Farm Conference held in Nashville, TN, September 10-13, 1996, are available. To obtain a copy, contact CSREES' Small Farm Program:

telephone 1-800/583-3071
fax 202/401-5179

communities. To subscribe or unsubscribe to the list, follow the instructions below.

To subscribe, send a message to: **majordomo@reeusda.gov**

In the body, type:
subscribe smallfarm@reeusda.gov

To unsubscribe, send a message to: **majordomo@reeusda.gov**

In the body, type:
unsubscribe smallfarm@reeusda.gov

ELECTRONIC MAIL DISCUSSION GROUP

The Small Farm Program's electronic mail discussion group is available for persons wishing to exchange informa-

services to the small farm community. Represented at the meeting were CSREES; the Economic Research Service; the Food and Consumer Service; the Farm Service Agency (FSA); the National Agricultural Statistics Service; the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS); the Rural Development mission area; and the Sustainable Agricultural Research and Education (SARE) Program. The group decided to meet quarterly to address small farm issues, with a high priority to be placed on helping small farmers maintain economic viability.

Also on the discussion agenda was the merger of the CSREES Office for Small-Scale Agriculture with the CSREES Small Farm Program; small farm outreach efforts by FSA and NRCS; the 1997 Census of Agriculture; funding opportunities for small farmers via SARE; and benefits of the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children to the small farm community. Because various USDA agencies have different definitions of "small farm," it was agreed that all the participants would present their definitions and then

tion, request assistance, share success stories, submit items for the USDA Small Farm website's listing of upcoming events, or announce availability of new resources and other materials of interest to the small farm community. Please feel free to use the group's electronic address (**smallfarm@reeusda.gov**) for these purposes. For additional information, contact the CSREES Small Farm Program at 1-800/583-3071. ■

Small Farm Digest is published quarterly by the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service, United States Department of Agriculture, Washington, DC 20250-2220.

The Secretary of Agriculture has determined that this periodical is necessary in the transaction of public business required by law.

Dan Glickman, Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture

I. Miley Gonzalez, Under Secretary
Research, Education, and Economics

B.H. Robinson, Administrator
Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service

Stephanie Olson Editor (202/401-6544)
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Readers wishing to contribute items to *Small Farm Digest* may send their submissions to Stephanie Olson, Editor, *Small Farm Digest*, CSREES, USDA, Mail Stop 2220, Washington, DC 20250-2220 (telephone: 202/401-6544; fax: 202/401-1602; e-mail: solson@reeusda.gov). Information in this publication is public property and may be reprinted without permission.

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To file a complaint, write the Secretary of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, DC 20250, or call 1-800/245-6340 or 202/720-1127 (TTY). USDA is an equal employment opportunity employer.

Small Farm Digest is available on the CSREES Home Page at <http://www.reeusda.gov/smallfarm>.

Subscriptions

Subscriptions to *Small Farm Digest* are available to the public at no charge. To subscribe to *Small Farm Digest*, discontinue a subscription, or to change an address, contact LaTracey Lewis, Small Farm Program, Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Mail Stop 2220, 1400 Independence Ave., S.W., Washington, DC 20250-2220 (telephone: 202/401-4587 or 1-800/583-3071; fax: 202/401-1602; e-mail: llewis@reeusda.gov). Individuals who previously subscribed to *Small-Scale Agriculture Today* or *Small and Part-Time Farms* will routinely receive *Small Farm Digest* and need not resubscribe.

Small Farm Digest is printed with soy-based ink on paper containing a minimum of 50 percent waste paper. *Small Farm Digest* is recyclable.

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Touching People's Lives: The AgrAbility Program

"I had no idea how to get back onto a tractor or a combine," said Dennis Seeman, a Woodward, IA, farmer, when he first faced a physical disability. "But others encouraged me, including staff members of USDA's AgrAbility Program. I was not even out of the hospital when they came to tell me that if I wanted to farm, they were there to help. They lined me up with a farmer who has farmed over 25 years with a disability, and he told me there's nothing you can't do."

Dennis Seeman is one of many farmers who have received direct help from the AgrAbility Program, a USDA-funded and administered initiative to help farmers with disabilities.

As many as 500,000 Americans have disabilities that interfere with their ability to perform essential tasks on the farm or ranch. Agriculture is a high-risk profession: A national survey conducted by the National Agricultural Statistics Service found that of the approximately 200,000 farm and ranch injuries documented, more than 9,000 resulted in a permanent disability in 1993.

CSREES supports extension and research programs to reduce agricultural injuries and illnesses. Brad Rein, CSREES National Program Leader for the Farm Safety and AgrAbility Programs, says, "While we need to continue our efforts to eliminate farm injuries, doing so will not eliminate the need to provide assistance to farm workers with disabilities. Half of the people to whom we provide assistance have disabilities from sources other than farming." Agricultural

workers also become disabled in off-the-farm accidents or through illnesses or health conditions such as heart disease, arthritis, or cancer. Older farmers may experience age-related limitations, including decreased vision and hearing or loss of strength. These disabilities often prevent rural residents from continuing in agricultural production or related work.

Farmers' families also can benefit from the program. Thousands of children born into agricultural families have disabilities such as cerebral palsy, mental retardation, and epilepsy. Physical and attitudinal barriers often prevent these children from participating fully in farm and ranch operations and from engaging in social and recreational activities enjoyed by other rural youth.

AgrAbility staff at the State and national levels assist agricultural and

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USDA COMMISSION...CONTINUED FROM PG. 1

farmers' ability to pass their farms on to their children.

Secretary Glickman has directed the Commission to study a wide range of programs and issues, including credit, risk management, education, and outreach, and to recommend improvements to better serve small and beginning farmers and their communities. The Commission will look at ways in which USDA can ensure that small farmers are treated fairly and that farmers have an equal opportunity to compete in agricultural systems.

Commission members also will identify and recommend ways to encourage small and beginning farmers to adopt a variety of farm operations, production practices, and marketing techniques that can help improve the viability and profitability of small farms.

COMMISSION MEMBERS

Members of the USDA National Commission on Small Farms include Harold L. Volkmer (Chair); Desmond Ansel Jolly (Vice Chair); Kathleen Sullivan Kelley (Vice Chair); Charles Woodrow Albertson; Karen S. Armstrong-Cummings; J. Roger Barber; Ernest L. Blount; Carrol D. Bolen; Marion Bowlan; Ben F. Burkett; Nelson Carrasquillo; Walter E. Coward; Robert M. Daniels, II; Richard Michael Foster; Raymond Edmund Gomez; Dario Vidal Guerra, Jr.; Greg T. Gunthorp; Jesse Harness; Chuck Hassebrook; Douglas G. Henderson; Everette Her-ness; Gladys Holland; Fred R. Magdoff; James B. Neely, Sr.; Jaclyn Kae Reid; Greg E. Smitman; Ronald Alan Stewart; Toulou Thao; Thomas Joseph Trantham, Jr.; and John Zippert.

To accomplish its work, the Commission has divided into five working subcommittees: (1) Small Farm Defini-

tion, cochaired by Chuck Hassebrook and Jesse Harness; (2) Marketing, chaired by Kathleen Sullivan Kelley; (3) Conservation and Environment, chaired by Jaclyn Reid; (4) Credit, Financing, and Taxes, chaired by Ernest Blount; and (5) Research, Education and Information, chaired by Desmond Jolly. The Commission will meet December 11-12 in Washington, DC, to draft a report of its findings and recommendations. The final document will be presented to Secretary Glickman shortly thereafter. For a copy of the report and additional information on the Commission and its activities, contact Jennifer Yezak Molen, Director, National Commission on Small Farms, P.O. Box 2890, Rm. 5237, South Building, USDA, Washington, DC 20013 (telephone: 202/690-0648 or 202/690-0673; fax: 202/720-0596; e-mail: smallfarm@usda.gov). ■



PROGRAMS

A wide range of resources is available to assist small farmers and ranchers and their communities. Readers wishing further information about the resources listed below are asked to contact the individuals or offices listed for each item.

Alternative Farming Systems Information Center (AFSIC). One of eight information centers at USDA's National Agricultural Library in Beltsville, MD, AFSIC is part of USDA's Agricultural Research Service (ARS). The Center specializes in locating, collecting, and providing information about alternative and industrial (non-food) crops and sustainable and alternative agricultural systems, including organic farming.

AFSIC also offers many free bibliographic publications and reference briefs on selected topics. Recent titles include *Organic Production: Recent Publications and Current Information Sources*; *Raising Emus and Ostriches*; *Compost: Application and Use*; *Part-time Farming*; *Small Farms and Small-scale Farming in the United States*; and *Sustainable Agriculture in Print: Recent Books*.

A full list of publications is updated monthly. The list, as well as the publications themselves, may be viewed and downloaded via AFSIC's website or requested in a hardcopy version from the AFSIC office.

For additional information, contact the Alternative Farming Systems Information Center, National Agricultural Library, ARS, USDA, 10301 Baltimore Ave., Rm. 304, Beltsville, MD 20705-2351 (telephone: 301/504-6559; fax: 301/504-6409; e-mail: afsic@nal.usda.gov; website: <http://www.nal.usda.gov/afsic>).



The Kerr Center for Sustainable Agriculture. The Center, near Poteau, OK, offers information on sustainable agriculture topics. Special concerns include natural resources; human and animal health; food quality and safety; environmental pollution; and the status of the family farm and farm communities.

The Center offers workshops, field days, seminars, and conferences. Specialists are available for speaking engagements on topics related to soils, crops, pastures, livestock, horticulture, farm management, forestry, wildlife, and sustainability. The Center also produces a newsletter, fact sheets, reports, and manuals for farmers, gardeners, business owners, and the public. For more information, contact Alan Ware, Horticulturist, The Kerr Center, P.O. Box 588, Poteau, OK 74953 (telephone: 918/647-9123; fax: 918/647-8712; e-mail: mailbox@kerrcenter.com).

Small Farmer Outreach. Improving the quality of life is the goal of South Carolina State University's Small Farmer Outreach Training and Technical Assistance Project. Limited-resource farm families can request assistance through the project, which helps small farmers identify and obtain loans from Federal agencies and commercial lenders; facilitates partnerships, collaboration, and improved communication between farmers and agribusiness industry; and provides training and technical assistance to improve farmers' incomes. For additional information,

contact Oscar P. Butler, Jr., South Carolina State University, P.O. Box 7205, Orangeburg, SC 29117 (telephone: 803/536-8229; fax: 803/536-7102). ■

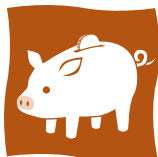


PRINT MEDIA

CSREES publications. Numerous publications are available upon request from CSREES' Small Farm Program. The *Getting Started in Farming* publication series, made available courtesy of the University of Missouri Cooperative Extension Service, includes *Getting Started in Farming; Mostly On Your Own; Part-Time or Small Farms; So You Have Inherited a Farm*; and *Via The Home Farm*. Other available publications include *Small Is Bountiful*; *Getting Started in Farming on a Small Scale*; *Overview of Small Farm Programs at the Land-Grant Colleges and Universities*; *Directory of State Extension Small Farm Contacts*; and *Proceedings of the National Small Farm Conference* (1996).

Factsheets may be ordered on the following: American ginseng; angora goats; aquaculture; asparagus; beekeeping; blueberries; brambles; cashmere goats; dairy and meat goats; exotic fruits; exotic livestock; foliage plants; herbs; mushrooms; northern nuts; organic farming; peppers; poultry; pumpkins; sheep; shiitake mushrooms; specialty corn; specialty flowers; specialty mushrooms; specialty potatoes; specialty vegetables; strawberries; wildflowers; and woodlots.

To order, contact the CSREES Small Farm Program, USDA, Mail Stop 2220, Washington, DC 20250-2220 (telephone: 1-800/583-3071; fax: 202/401-5179). ■



GRANTS, LOANS, TRAINING

A number of grant, loan, and training programs are available to support small farmers and their communities. Examples of such programs are summarized below. Readers wishing additional information are asked to contact the individuals or offices listed for each item.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program. Established in the 1996 Farm Bill, the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is designed to assist farmers facing serious threats to soil, water, and related natural resources. EQIP offers 5- to 10-year contracts that provide cost-sharing and incentive payments for conservation practices called for in a site-specific plan. USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), in cooperation with USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA), provides leadership for EQIP, which is available in every State. Funding comes from the Federal Government's Commodity Credit Corporation.

Nationally, the program provides technical, financial, and educational assistance, primarily in designated priority areas with special environmental sensitivity or significant soil, water, or related natural resource concerns. For details, contact your county NRCS office or Soil Conservation District, FSA, or the Cooperative Extension Service, or get in touch with Jeff Loser, National Environmental Quality Incentives Program Manager, Natural Resources Conservation Service (telephone: 202/720-1834; fax: 202/720-4265; e-mail: jeff.loser@usdagov).

Extension training. The Larimer County Office of Colorado State University Cooperative Extension has developed a volunteer training program for Small Acreage Management,



based on the Master Gardener Program model. Volunteers receive 40 hours of training in small acreage issues and, in return, volunteer 40 hours of time to help the area agricultural extension agent answer questions in this area. Training is provided in topics such as soils; irrigation and soil issues; grasses; poisonous weeds; pesticides; equipment for smaller tracts; and cultural, biological, and wildlife issues. For additional information, contact Bob Hamblen (telephone: 970/498-6000 or e-mail: hambleb@co.larimer.co.us).

Farm Service Agency. The Farm Service Agency (FSA) can provide direct or guaranteed loans for new and existing operations. Applicants conducting a family-size farm operation may be eligible. For additional information, contact your local Farm Service Agency office (under USDA in the blue pages of the telephone book) or FSA's Farm Program Loan Making Division in Washington, DC (telephone: 202/720-1632).

Fund for Rural America. Unique, innovative, high-impact research, education, and extension programs and projects to aid farmers, ranchers, and rural communities are eligible for support from USDA's Fund for Rural America (FRA). Eligible applicants include Federal research agencies, national laboratories, colleges, universities, research foundations, and private research organizations. Collaboration is encouraged among extension personnel, research scientists, and educators to identify and solve

problems relevant to agriculture and rural communities.

The *FY 1998 FRA Request for Proposals* is expected to be available in early 1998. Current information is accessible on the FRA website (<http://www.reeusda.gov/fra>). To be included on the FRA mailing list by electronic mail, send an e-mail message to majordomo@reeusda.gov and type the following, one-line-only message in the "message" space: subscribe fund. For additional information, contact Patrick O'Brien, Deputy Administrator, Special Programs, CSREES, USDA, Mail Stop 2240, Washington, DC 20250-2240 (telephone: 202/401-6251; e-mail: pobrien@reeusda.gov).

Small Business Innovation Research Program. USDA's Small Business Innovation Research Program awards competitive grants to qualified science-based small businesses for innovative research on important problems faced by American agriculture and/or rural America. All small business owners, including farmers and ranchers, are eligible to apply.

Proposals may be submitted in nine topic areas: forests and related resources; plant production and protection; animal production and protection; air, water, and soils; food science and nutrition; rural and community development; aquaculture; industrial applications; and marketing and trade. Proposals are evaluated via confidential peer review by reviewers from universities and government research laboratories.

For further information, contact Charles Cleland, Director, Small Business Innovation Research Program, USDA, Mail Stop 2243, 1400 Independence Ave., S.W., Washington, DC 20250-2243 (telephone: 202/401-4002; fax: 202/401-6070; website: <http://www.reeusda.gov/sbir/sbir.htm>). ■

Digest, which premieres with this issue. The new publication, edited and produced by CSREES' Communications, Technology, and Distance Education unit, will reach more than 30,000 readers throughout the United States and its territories. The *Digest* will be available on CSREES' Home Page at <http://www.reeusda.gov> (select "Programs" and then "Small Farm Program") or directly via <http://www.reeusda.gov/smallfarm>.



Serving as editor of *Small Farm Digest* is CSREES Program Support Specialist **Stephanie K. Olson**.

A member of CSREES' Plant and Animal Systems staff since 1991, Olson's previous positions include those of Director of USDA's 1890 Capacity Building Grants Program; Writer and Program Specialist with the National Endowment for the Arts; and Coordinator of the Smithsonian Institution's American Indian Cultural Resources

Training Program.

Olson, a published author in the area of American studies and an educational consultant, holds a bachelor's degree in English and a master's degree in art education from the University of Maryland in College Park.

For additional information on *Small Farm Digest*, contact Olson at CSREES, USDA, Mail Stop 2220, Washington, DC 20250-2220 (telephone: 202/401-6544; fax: 202/401-1602; e-mail: solson@reeusda.gov).



Denis Ebodaghe will continue in his capacity as National Program Leader for Small Farms and as

Director of CSREES' Small Farm Program. Born in Nigeria, West Africa, Ebodaghe came to the United States nearly 25 years ago. After attending Fort Valley State University in Fort Valley, GA, he continued his studies at North Dakota State University in Fargo, where he earned his B.S. and M.S. degrees in mechanized agricul-

ture in 1977 and 1979, respectively. In 1986, Ebodaghe earned a Ph.D. in agronomy at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, beginning his USDA career in Tappahannock, VA, with the Soil Conservation Service in 1987. He joined the former USDA Extension Service in 1990 and worked in the Small Farms and Water Quality Program areas until 1994, when he became Soil Scientist and National Program Leader for CSREES' Small Farm Program.

The Small Farm Program is designed to improve small farm operations throughout the United States and its territories via partnership and collaboration with the land-grant university system and other public and private sectors, including farmers, community-based organizations, foundations, and others. For additional information about the program, contact Denis Ebodaghe at CSREES, USDA, Mail Stop 2220, Washington, DC 20250-2220 (telephone: 202/401-4385; fax: 202/401-5179; e-mail: debodaghe@reeusda.gov). ■

work together to develop a single definition for consideration by USDA. Participants also received copies of the *Proceedings* of the National Small Farm Conference held in Nashville, TN, September 10-13, 1996.

NATIONAL PLAN FOR SMALL FARMS

At an April 16-17 meeting in Washington, DC, small farm professionals and experts from the 1862 and 1890 land-grant institutions, CSREES, the Agricultural Research Service, and the Economic Research Service met to develop a draft *National Plan for Small Farms* for CSREES and the land-grant university system. CSREES Administrator B.H. Robinson presided

at the opening and closing sessions of the meeting.

Among the concepts emphasized in the discussions were (1) the importance of small farms to the U.S. farm economy; (2) the diversity of the small farm population, which holds about one-third of the Nation's farmland; (3) the economic and social contributions of small farmers to American agriculture; and (4) the significant role of small farms in providing open space for wildlife habitat at a time when many nongame species are experiencing serious population declines. Participants also discussed the elements of a good definition of "small farm" and agreed that small farms can be defined in terms of several types of categories.

SMALL FARM DEFINITION

On May 15, CSREES convened a meeting of representatives of several USDA agencies with small farm programs or with information of benefit to small farmers to discuss the development of a uniform USDA definition of "small farm." Attending the meeting were representatives of the Agricultural Marketing Service, CSREES, the Economic Research Service, the Farm Service Agency, the Food and Consumer Service, the Foreign Agricultural Service, the National Agricultural Statistics Service, and the Rural Development mission area.

Currently, a number of terms are used within the Department to refer to small farms, including "limited-

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agribusiness workers who have physical and mental disabilities through an innovative network of rural rehabilitation professionals, engineers, and extension educators who work together to get farmers and ranchers back to work after a disability, injury, or illness threatens their way of life.

AgrAbility project staff provide help by

- Assessing agricultural worksites and suggesting modifications.
- Suggesting ways in which equipment may be adapted.
- Analyzing agricultural tasks and suggesting ways they can be restructured.
- Mobilizing and coordinating community resources and services.
- Facilitating rural independent living.
- Coordinating peer counseling and support groups.
- Teaching agricultural safety and prevention of secondary injury.

Since its establishment in 1991, the AgrAbility Program has provided technical assistance to more than 9,000 disabled farmers and ranchers and their families through over 3,600 on-site visits. In addition, nearly 60,000 professionals have been trained to assist persons with disabilities. ■

AGRABILITY PROGRAMS

For further information on AgrAbility Programs near you, contact the AgrAbility Project in one of the following States:

Colorado* 303/233-1666
Idaho 1-800/523-4342
Illinois 217/525-0398
Indiana 765/494-5088
Iowa 515/289-1933
Kentucky 1-800/333-2814
Louisiana* 504/388-2229
Minnesota 507/931-4043
Mississippi 601/325-3103
Missouri 573/874-1646
Montana 1-800/523-4342
Nebraska 1-800/471-6425
New Jersey 609/392-4004
New York 607/255-1143
North Carolina 919/515-9151
North Dakota 1-800/548-1372
Ohio 1-800/678-6346
Pennsylvania 814/863-7868
South Dakota 605/688-5141
Tennessee 423/544-7444
Vermont* 802/656-5433
Wisconsin 608/262-9336

*AgrAbility-affiliated programs

USDA: THE PEOPLE'S DEPARTMENT

America Counts on Agriculture

For the first time, the Census of Agriculture is now the responsibility of USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS). In prior years, the Census of Agriculture was conducted by the Bureau of the Census, which is part of the U.S. Department of Commerce.

The high priority placed on the Census by USDA ensures the continuation of the Census of Agriculture and the availability of adequate resources to conduct a 1997 Census comparable to the 1992 Census. The Census provides the only source of consistent, county-level statistics on agricultural operations throughout the United States.

The 1997 Census of Agriculture will be similar to the 1987 and 1992 censuses. It will include data such as land use and ownership; operator characteristics; crops, machinery, and equipment; livestock; irrigation activities; Federal program payments; market value of products; and farm products.

For additional information, contact Customer Service, Census of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service, USDA (telephone: 888/424-7828; e-mail: nass@nass.usda.gov; or website: <http://www.nass.usda.gov>). ■

resource farm," "family farm," "small family farm," "socially disadvantaged farm," "small farm," "medium farm," "farm," and even "large farm." Participants discussed the diversity of small farms reflected in this range of terms. They also noted the importance of a simplified small farm definition in responding to the Reinventing Government Initiative, in which agencies are called upon to be customer-driven and to conduct the business of USDA effectively.

As a first step, participants decided to share their working definitions of "small farm" with one another in order to obtain an overview of various definitions. They expressed their intention to arrive at a more uniform "small farm" definition pending further discussion. ■

CSREES' SMALL FARM HOTLINE
1-800/583-3071

SFD AVAILABLE ON THE WEB

To read *Small Farm Digest* on the CSREES Home Page, access

<http://www.reeusda.gov>
and select "Programs" and then "Small Farm Program." You may access the Digest directly via
<http://www.reeusda.gov/smallfarm>

UPCOMING

Date	Event	Location	Contact
Jan. 9-10	2nd Annual Great Plains Vegetable Conference	St. Joseph, MO	Keith Hawxby • 816/279-1691
Jan. 9-10	17th Annual Oklahoma Horticulture Industries Show	Tulsa, OK	Dean McCraw • 405/744-5409
Jan. 14	Southern Region Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) Annual Workshop	Memphis, TN	Roseanne Minarovic • 919/515-3252
Jan. 20-22	Annual Meeting, Vegetable Growers Association	Atlantic City, NJ	Phil Traino • 609/985-4382
Feb. 17-20	Mid-Atlantic Direct Marketing Conference	Lancaster, PA	Larry Yager • 717/334-0166
Feb. 18-20	University of California-Davis Weed Science School Session 1	Davis, CA	Mary Schlosser • 916/754-9618
Feb. 23-25	University of California-Davis Weed Science School Session 2	Davis, CA	Mary Schlosser • 916/754-9618
Feb. 26-28	North American Farmers' Direct Marketing Conference and North American Strawberry Growers Annual Meeting	Victoria, BC Canada	Brent Warner • 250/656-0941

The above entries reflect information available as *Small Farm Digest* went to press. For a current list of events, see CSREES' Small Farm website (<http://www.reeusda.gov/smallfarm>). *Small Farm Digest* welcomes information on upcoming events. Please send submissions to Stephanie Olson, Editor, *Small*

Farm Digest, CSREES, USDA, Mail Stop 2220, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, DC 20250-2220 (telephone: 202/401-6544; fax: 202/401-1602; e-mail: solson@reeusda.gov).

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